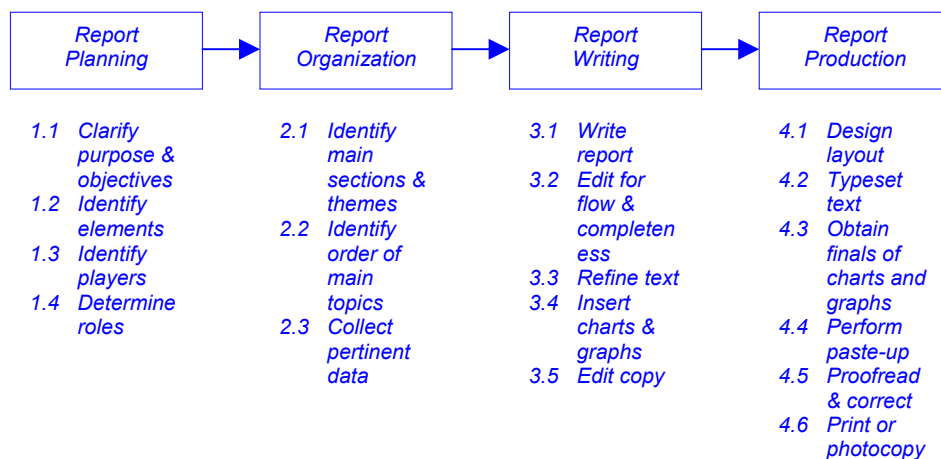# FLOWCHARTS

## WHAT IS A FLOWCHART?

**Flowcharts are a useful way to outline, using step-by-step schematic diagrams, sequences of events and/or actions… This picture provides common reference points and standard language for teams to use when discussing existing processes, as well as process improvement and redesign activities…**

## HIGH-LEVEL OR DETAILED?

**High-Level Flowchart: A high-level flowchart is often used to illustrate the interrelationship between major groups of activities. Typically, ten major processes and sub-processes are shown by this type of flowchart. This type of flowchart includes only basic information, and, as such, is the best choice to show entire processes and essential sub-processes. By limiting the amount of information that goes into a single chart, team members are forced to narrow their thinking to only those steps essential to the process. The resulting picture omits inspection and rework, as well as other steps that respond to quality problems. To construct this type of flowchart, first list the most basic steps in the process being studied or project being planned. You should end up with no more than ten steps, listing these steps across the top of the page flipchart, then below each one, list the major sub-steps, again no more than ten each. An example of a high-level flowchart follows…**

| Report Planning | → | Report Organization | → | Report Writing | → | Report Production |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| Report Planning | Report Organization | Report Writing | Report Production |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 Clarify purpose & objectives | 2.1 Identify main sections & themes | 3.1 Write report | 4.1 Design layout |
| 1.2 Identify elements | 2.2 Identify order of main topics | 3.2 Edit for flow & completeness | 4.2 Typeset text |
| 1.3 Identify players | 2.3 Collect pertinent data | 3.3 Refine text | 4.3 Obtain finals of charts and graphs |
| 1.4 Determine roles | | 3.4 Insert charts & graphs | 4.4 Perform paste-up |
| | | 3.5 Edit copy | 4.5 Proofread & correct |
| | | | 4.6 Print or photocopy |

**Detailed:** A detailed flowchart contains a substantial amount of information about activities at each and every step in a sub-process.  It includes most, if not all, of the steps, including rework steps, that may be needed to correct errors and omissions in a process.  When appropriate, detailed flowcharts also show the individuals performing each activity, or set of tasks, and document how much time is required to complete each activity.  If necessary, the link between various points in the sub-processes and other high-level flowcharts of the process are shown.  Generally, high-level flowcharts are sufficient, however, teams sometimes teams need more detail in order to understand where problems arise.  Detailed flowcharts should be used sparingly because the detail they provide is sometimes unnecessary. Due to the amount of detail, it may take weeks to achieve a flowchart that the entire team agrees on.  If you make the decision to use a detailed flowchart, make sure every member of the team agrees about how much detail to include.  An example of a detailed flowchart follows…

```
            ┌──────────────────────────┐
            │  Prepare Proposal Package │
            └──────────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
            ┌──────────────────────────┐
            │  Prepare Proposal Response│
            └──────────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
            ┌──────────────────────────┐
            │  Develop Statement of Work│
            └──────────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
            ┌──────────────────────────┐
            │  Review Statement of Work │◄──────────┐
            └──────────────────────────┘           │
                         │                          │
                         ▼                      No  │
            ┌──────────────────────────┐           │
            │  Develop Legal Instrument │           │
            └──────────────────────────┘           │
                         │                          │
                         ▼                          │
            ┌──────────────────────────┐           │
            │   Develop Sole Source     │◄────────┐ │
            │   Justification           │         │ │
            │   (If Necessary)          │         │ │
            └──────────────────────────┘         │ │
                         │                        │ │
                         ▼                        │ │
            ┌──────────────────────────┐          │ │
            │        Approved?          │──────────┘ │
            └──────────────────────────┘            │
                         │ Yes                       │
                         ▼                      No   │
            ┌──────────────────────────┐            │
            │   Perform Office Review   │            │
            └──────────────────────────┘            │
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            ┌──────────────────────────┐             │
            │        Approved?          │─────────────┘
            └──────────────────────────┘
                         │ Yes
                         ▼
            ┌──────────────────────────┐
            │    Proposal Completed     │
            └──────────────────────────┘
```